

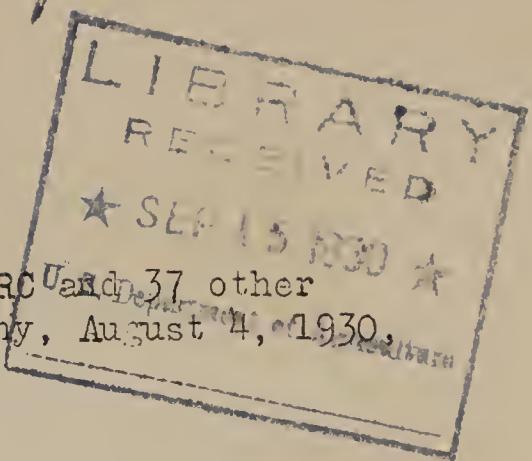
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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio talk by W.R. Beattie, delivered through WRC and 37 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, August 4, 1930, in the National Farm and Home Hour.



Hello Friends: Last Thursday, I paid a return visit to the splendid farming country located near Frederick, Maryland, and I went to tell you that the stories about the way crops have suffered from the drought have not been exaggerated, in fact, I do not believe that the picture has been painted as bad as it really is. Those beautiful valleys of western Maryland and northern Virginia are parched and browned as though they had been scorched with a fire. I saw field after field of sweet corn grown for the canneries which had tasseled out and the tassels were drooping as though half dead and not the sign of an ear on the stalks. In many cases the farmers were cutting the fodder and hauling it into their pastures where they were scattering it for the dairy cattle to eat.

Many of the streams are completely dry, and the water situation is becoming serious everywhere. Last week, I stated in my Garden Calendar talk that I was surprised at the way certain crops were holding up in spite of the extreme drought. During the past week some of these crops have given up the fight and are now beyond revival, even if rains were to come today.

Reports have come of injury to fruit trees from the drought, but in my rounds last Thursday, I found that the fruit trees were holding up remarkably well, although there appears to be a rather heavy premature drop of fruit.

Many gardens in the section where I traveled and which were in fine condition 5 weeks ago are now practically gone. Late potatoes, where planted, have come up very poorly. Late beans are showing a very inferior growth, and Lima beans are failing to set pods. It doesn't look very promising for fall gardens, but let us hope that we will get rains in time so that we can plant a few crops for fall use and to produce some vegetables for storage.

On my trip last Thursday, I noted no less than 25 or 30 cases where grass fires had started, but had been quickly controlled. I also noted two cases where these fires were in orchards, and wherever the grass had burned beneath the trees the trees are badly scorched and apparently dying. Orchardists throughout the drought-stricken area should take measures to protect their orchards from fire, especially by plowing fire-control strips along the roads and adjoining fields where there is any possibility of fires getting started. It takes very little burning to injure fruit trees. Just a little grass fire sweeping through the orchard will scorch the bark and the lower limbs of the trees, causing damage that cannot be estimated.

Tomorrow at this hour Mr. H.N. Wheeler is to give a talk on "Forestry and Wild Life," and I was especially pleased to note that the Chief Forester of the State of Virginia has sent a circular letter to all the forest wardens

in the state suggesting that they advertise Mr. Wheeler's talk and advise the farmers of their county to listen in to what Mr. Wheeler has to say. There is such an intimate relation between the work of the fruit grower and that work represented by Mr. Wheeler that I want to especially call your attention so that you will hear what Mr. Wheeler has to say tomorrow.

I happen to be connected with a local volunteer fire unit in my own community, and while we normally consider the forest fire hazard over when the spring growth of the forest starts, but this year we have been continually called upon to fight forest and field fires, in many cases to protect buildings stacks of grain, and often livestock from destruction.

The plowing of a fire strip 8 or 10 feet in width around the orchard or small fruit plantings is perhaps the best form of protection. If you own a nice young orchard in which there is even a small amount of dry grass or weeds, I would advise you to take steps immediately to protect it from fire.

Ex-Governor Byrd of Virginia, who as many of you know is the owner of large apple orchards and one of the heaviest export shippers of apples in the east, has invited approximately 2,000 apple growers of Virginia to meet at his summer home the latter part of August to discuss the apple marketing situation with special reference to the embargo recently placed upon certain grades of American apples by England. This will be a meeting of great importance to the apple industry of the eastern States. I believe that if more of our fruit and vegetable growers were to meet together in regional groups about once a year that it would result in great good, both for themselves and for the industry they represent. This meeting of Virginia apple growers is being called at a time when the growers are hard hit by the drought on top of which comes the embargo, but I am willing to wager that under Ex-Governor Byrd's able leadership, they will solve most of their difficulties when they get together.

Next week the National Vegetable Growers Association of America will hold its annual convention at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This organization was formed at Cleveland, Ohio, in 1908, and has among its membership many of the leading vegetable producers of the country. They don't get away from home very often, but this annual convention gives them a chance to renew their old acquaintances, and to discuss many of the problems that they have to face in this day of changing production and marketing conditions.

Owing to the scarcity of late summer flowers from which to gather honey, bees may be expected to work extensively upon grapes and other fruits this season. My grapes are beginning to ripen, and I note that the yellow jackets are beginning to puncture the skins after which the honey bees soon remove all of the juice leaving only the skins and seeds. I do not know of any repellent that may be safely used, but covering the best bunches with paper bags will usually save them. I am taking 200 or 300 2-pound bags home with me this evening, and after supper all hands will spend an hour or so bagging the best of the bunches. We slip the bag over the bunch and

and fold the mouth of the bag securely around the stem of the bunch, then fasten it with a short piece of soft cord or with a pin. Birds sometimes damage the ripening grapes and have been known to even tear off the bags in order to get to the fruit.

